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58
FEB

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



CAPULLA
57
M'FARLANE
B...

image® **COMICS PRESENTS:**

"ORPHANS"



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Dedicated to
The Memory of:
Sally Snyder

Spawn #57 Summary:

Although extremely traumatized, Forsberg the military strategist, is successfully transported to Spawn's alley for safe-keeping until Terry and Al figure out how to use him to their advantage against Jason Wynn. When Cy-Gor makes a surprise attack on Spawn, Forsberg huddles in the background watching the great cybernetic simian and Spawn battle. He then returns to reality with some startling information about Cy-Gor's origin and connection to Jason Wynn.

FOR IMAGE COMICS
LARRY MARDER - Executive Director

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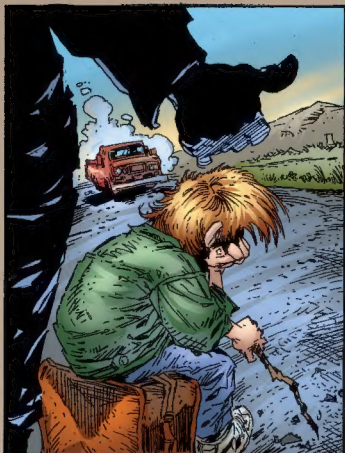
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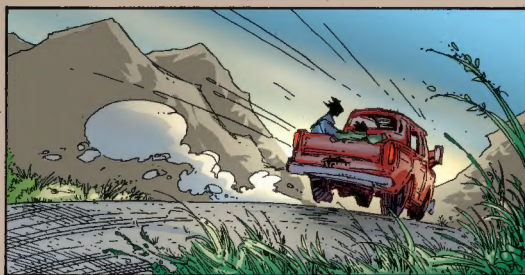
TWO MONTHS AGO, WHEN THE OTHER BOYS FIRST HEARD THEIR PLAN, THEY WERE MET WITH MOCKING LAUGHTER. SOON, THAT TURNED TO SCATHING INSULTS... AND THEN TO PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION.



BUT EACH TAUNTING SERVED ONLY TO MAKE EDDIE MORE FOCUSED ON GETTING HIMSELF AND HIS LITTLE BROTHER ANDY TO THE ONE PERSON WHO UNDERSTOOD THEM.



ESCAPING THE JUVENILE DETENTION WARD DIDN'T TAKE MUCH. SECURITY HAD ALWAYS BEEN SLOPPY. OF GREATER CONCERN WAS THE LACK OF FOOD AND MONEY THEY'D NEED TO MAKE THEIR LONG TREK.



BOTH BOYS KNEW SACRIFICES WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE, SO A PACT WAS MADE THAT NEITHER WOULD COMPLAIN. MUCH.

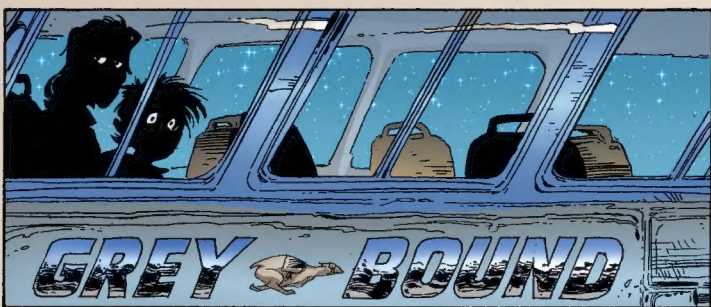


FOR NEARLY TWO WEEKS THEY TRAVELLED BY WHATEVER MEANS AVAILABLE, EATING AND DRINKING THE BARE MINIMUM.



THE LAST OF THEIR MONEY BOUGHT A PAIR OF TICKETS THAT WOULD SOON BRING THEIR ODYSSEY TO ITS END.

AND, AS THE SCENIC LANDSCAPE SLOWLY TRANSFORMS INTO A GREY, TOWERING MONSTROSITY, FLORENCE, ALABAMA, SEEMS A MILLION MILES AWAY.





AT FIRST, THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. THE PEOPLE. THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM. THEN, ONE OF THE ATTENDANTS AT THE PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL GUIDES THEM TO AN EXIT.

THEY'VE DONE IT.

NOW, ALL THEY HAVE TO DO IS FIND ONE SINGLE PERSON AMONG THE MILLIONS WHO LIVE IN THIS MAN-MADE JUNGLE.

NEW YORK CITY. THE FIRST SIGHT OF ITS DEPTHS HAS TRIGGERED A FLOOD OF EMOTIONS IN EVERY FIRST-TIME VISITOR.

OPTIMISM. DELIGHT. APPREHENSION. FEAR.

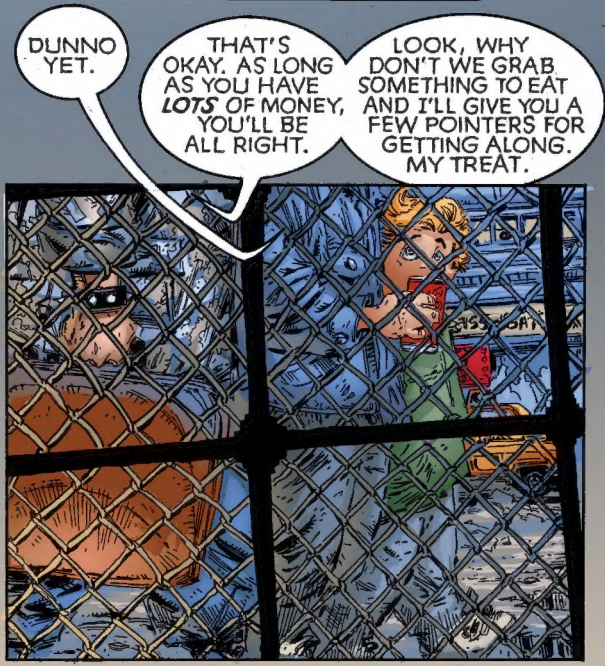
IT'S THESE FEELINGS THAT ARE TARGETED BY THOSE WHO PREY UPON THE UNINITIATED.

THE INNOCENT.



HEY, KIDS, YOU LOOK THIRSTY. HAVE A DRINK. IT'S FREE.

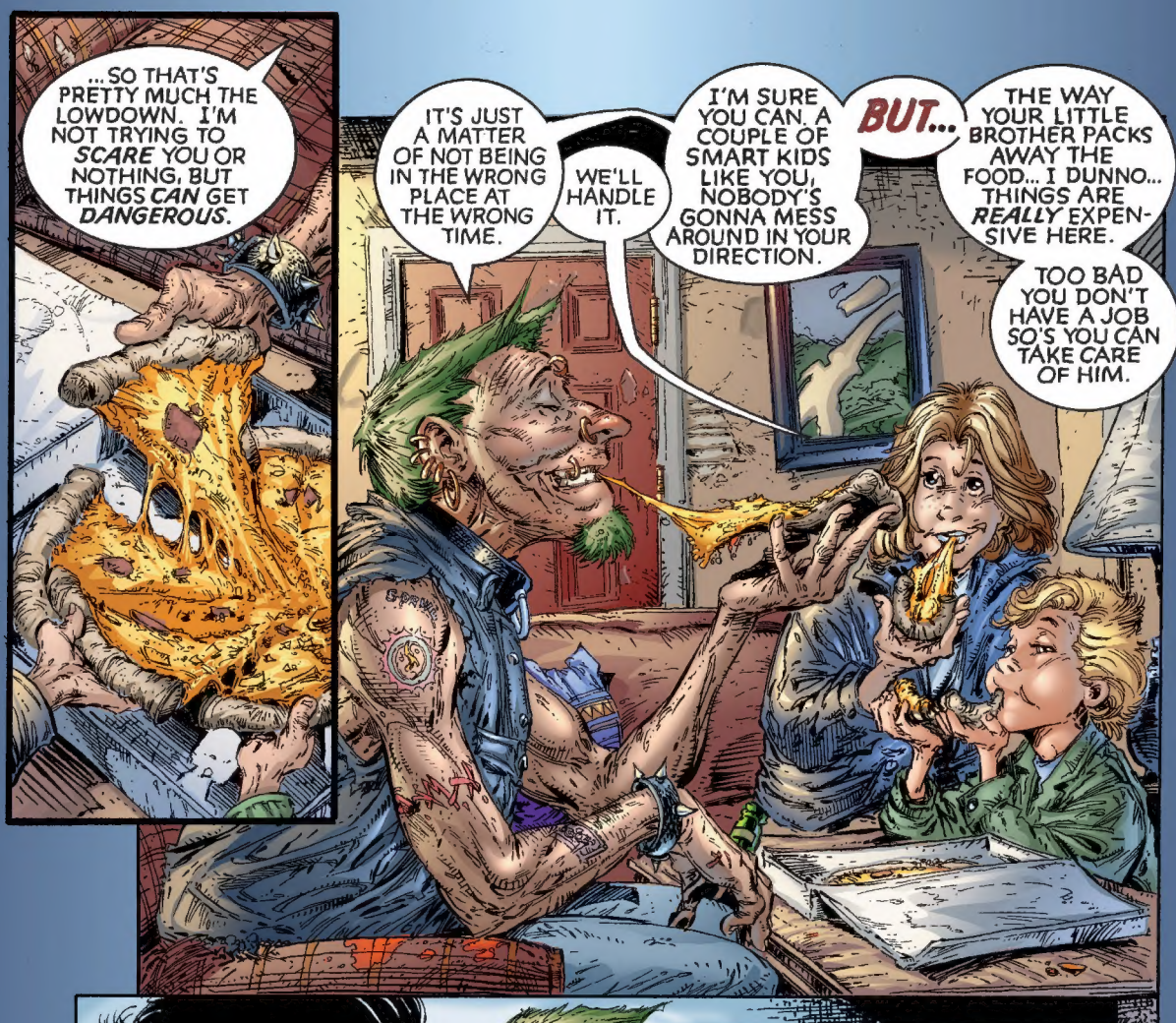
HERE, LET ME HELP YOU WITH YOUR BAGS. THEY LOOK HEAVY. SO, WHERE YOU TWO HEADING ANYWAYS?



DUNNO YET.

THAT'S OKAY. AS LONG AS YOU HAVE LOTS OF MONEY, YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

LOOK, WHY DON'T WE GRAB SOMETHING TO EAT AND I'LL GIVE YOU A FEW POINTERS FOR GETTING ALONG. MY TREAT.



... SO THAT'S
PRETTY MUCH THE
LOWDOWN. I'M
NOT TRYING TO
SCARE YOU OR
NOTHING, BUT
THINGS CAN GET
DANGEROUS.

IT'S JUST
A MATTER
OF NOT BEING
IN THE WRONG
PLACE AT
THE WRONG
TIME.

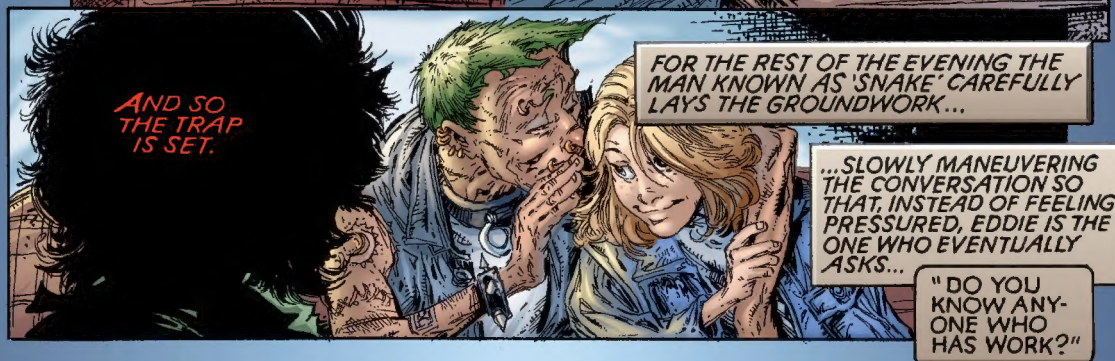
WE'LL
HANDLE
IT.

I'M SURE
YOU CAN. A
COUPLE OF
SMART KIDS
LIKE YOU,
NOBODY'S
GONNA MESS
AROUND IN YOUR
DIRECTION.

BUT...

THE WAY
YOUR LITTLE
BROTHER PACKS
AWAY THE
FOOD... I DUNNO...
THINGS ARE
REALLY EXPEN-
SIVE HERE.

TOO BAD
YOU DON'T
HAVE A JOB
SO'S YOU CAN
TAKE CARE
OF HIM.

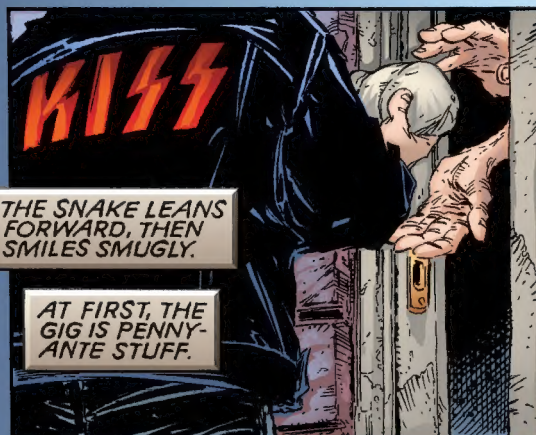


**AND SO
THE TRAP
IS SET.**

FOR THE REST OF THE EVENING THE
MAN KNOWN AS 'SNAKE' CAREFULLY
LAYS THE GROUNDWORK...

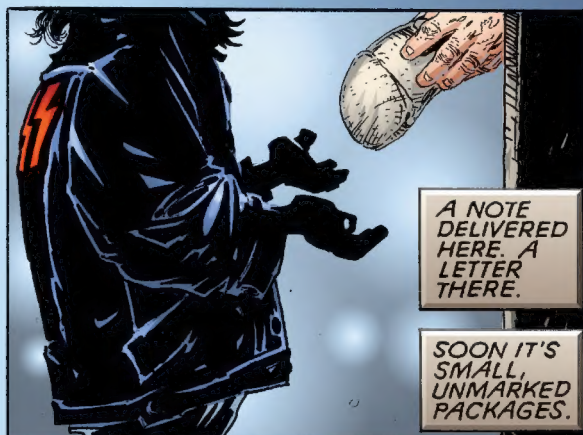
... SLOWLY MANEUVERING
THE CONVERSATION SO
THAT, INSTEAD OF FEELING
PRESSURED, EDDIE IS THE
ONE WHO EVENTUALLY
ASKS...

"DO YOU
KNOW ANY-
ONE WHO
HAS WORK?"



WIIII
THE SNAKE LEANS
FORWARD, THEN
SMILES SMUGLY.

AT FIRST, THE
GIG IS PENNY-
ANTE STUFF.



A NOTE
DELIVERED
HERE. A
LETTER
THERE.

SOON IT'S
SMALL,
UNMARKED
PACKAGES.

SLOWLY, OTHER
ELEMENTS ARE
INTRODUCED.
FIRST, MONEY,
THE ONE THAT
MAKES THE
MOST SENSE
TO EDDIE.

EACH IS EMBRACED BY AN
INNOCENT FOURTEEN-YEAR-
OLD BOY LONGING TO FEEL
WANTED. TO HIS CREDIT, HE
INDULGES IN
MODERATION.

IT'S NOT THE
HIGHS THAT
SEDUCE HIM
AS MUCH AS
THE SENSE OF
POWER HE
GETS FROM
BEING A PART
OF THIS
URBAN CULT.

AND THOUGH HE
UNDERSTANDS
THE HYPOCRACY
OF IT, EDDIE
WON'T ALLOW
ANDY TO BE
INVOLVED IN
ANY OF IT.

FOR
PROTECTING
HIS LITTLE
BROTHER IS
STILL A
PRIORITY.

BUT THAT
WAS THIRTY
DAYS AGO... AND
THIS IS NEW YORK.



TONIGHT.

TALONED HANDS,
SKILLED AS A
SURGEON'S, MANI-
PULATE INTRICATE
BIONETICS, DISSECT-
ING CYBERNETIC
GEARBOXES
PREVIOUSLY
HIDDEN BY FUR.

STOP
IT.

LEAVE
HIM
ALONE.

WHAT'RE
YOU
DOING?

WE'RE
GOING
TO DIE.

WOULD YOU
SHUT UP!
I'M GETTING
TIRED OF YOUR
RANTINGS.

WHY
ARE YOU
DOING
THIS?

WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

WHERE'S
MY
FAMILY?

GODDAMN
YOU! WHO
HAS MY
FAMILY?!

THEY'RE
HUNGRY.

MY WIFE.
MY BOY.
THEY NEED
FOOD.

LISTEN,
CAPTAIN PSYCHO,
IF YOU DON'T SHUT
THE HELL UP IN
ABOUT TWO
SECONDS, I'M
GOING TO LET
THOSE WORMS
HAVE THEIR WAY
WITH YOU.

YOU
DON'T
SCARE
ME.

YES
I DO.

YOU SEE,
MOST MEN DON'T
SHAKE UNCONTROLLABLY
WHILE LYING IN THEIR OWN
URINE. ESPECIALLY THOSE
WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO
BE MILITARY
GENIUSES.

KLICH

YOU
MUST KNOW
WHAT THIS
IS.



SURELY
YOU'VE SEEN
A TRACKING
IMPLANT
BEFORE.

IT'S ROUTINELY
INSTALLED IN
MOBILE HARDWARE
UNITS. THE GOVERN-
MENT STIFFS DON'T
LIKE TAKING
CHANCES.

ESPECIALLY
WITH SUCH AN
EXPENSIVE
ITEM.



BUT I'M
CURIOUS
TO SEE WHAT
HAPPENS
WHEN I BURST
THEIR
BUBBLE.

WHETHER
THEY HAVE
THE GUTS TO
TACKLE ME
ALONE.



JOHNNY!

GODDAMNIT!
I'VE LOST HIM!
THE SIGNAL JUST
WENT DEAD!

WHAT?

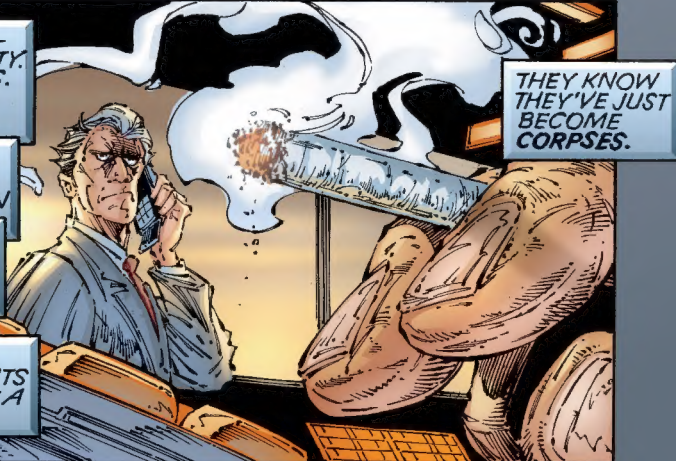
THEN YOU
GET IT BACK,
NOW! YOU
HEAR? SOMEHOW,
SOMEWAY, YOU
FIND THAT
SIGNAL.

SYSTEMATICALLY-- FRANTICALLY--
THEY EXHAUST EVERY POSSIBILITY.
RECONNECTION NEVER HAPPENS.
BOTH MEN KNOW THEY'VE BEEN
PUSHED INTO A CORNER.

SO WHEN THE PHONE RINGS
THEY LET IT GO WITHOUT
ANSWERING IT LONGER THAN
USUAL.

HEADQUARTERS IS
CHECKING IN, AS
ALWAYS, FOR A
STATUS REPORT.

AS THE CONVERSATION WINDS
DOWN, THE TWO TRACKING AGENTS
STARE AT EACH OTHER, SHARING A
CHILLING UNDERSTANDING.



THEY KNOW
THEY'VE JUST
BECOME
CORPSES.

THROUGH AN ELABORATE INFRASTRUCTURE OF LEGITIMATE AND ROGUE GOVERNMENT DIVISIONS, VARIOUS CALLS ARE PLACED. A SYSTEM HAS LONG BEEN IN PLACE DESIGNED TO CONCEAL ANY SIGN OF MALFEASANCE...

... KEEPING THOSE INVOLVED INSULATED FROM DETECTION (AND EACH OTHER), WHILE COMPLETELY SHIELDING ITS RINGMASTER.

... AND AS YOU'VE NO DOUBT BECOME AWARE, I'VE BEEN LOSING TIME TO SEVERAL DISTRACTIONS.

"YES, Mr. WYNN."

"I SUGGEST YOU DEVOTE YOURSELF TO FINDING OUR MISSING APE. I NEED SPEED AND *SUBTLETY*. THE PRESIDENT ALREADY HAS HIS BOY SCOUTS CAMPING AT MY DOOR."

FOR THE HUNDREDTH TIME, CY-GOR SEEMED INTENT ON REACHING NEW YORK IN A HURRY.

WHETHER HE'S STILL IN THE ALLEYS, THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING.

LATER...

THE NEW TEAM WILL BE OPERATIONAL IN A FEW HOURS. IF THAT BEAST SO MUCH AS SNEEZES, WE'LL KNOW ABOUT IT. OUR REAL CONCERN IS THAT THE PUBLIC NOT FIND IT FIRST.

I TRUST YOU CAN KEEP THAT FROM HAPPENING. ESPECIALLY WITH THE NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS ON YOUR PAYROLL.

AS FOR THE PREVIOUS GROUP... WHEN WILL THEY BE TAKEN CARE OF?

AS WE SPEAK.

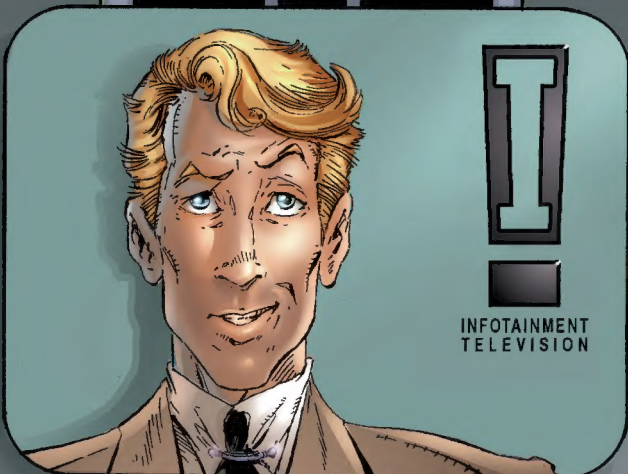
KLAK!

THE BODIES OF CY-GOR'S PRECEDING MONITORING TEAM WILL NEVER BE FOUND WHERE THEY'RE TO BE DUMPED-- UNDER TONS OF REFUSE IN A DISTANT LANDFILL.

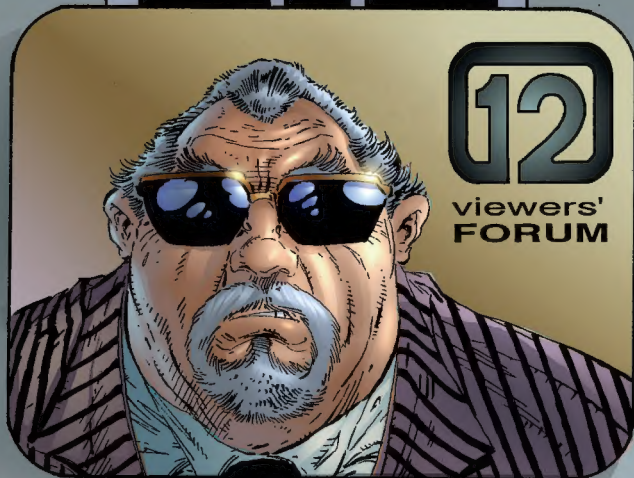
BETWEEN THEM, THEY LEAVE BEHIND TWO WIVES AND FIVE CHILDREN.



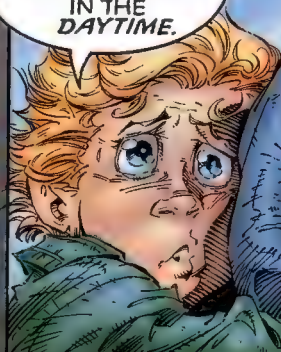
... INDICATES A GROWING LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESIDENT. THE LATEST NUMBERS SHOW THE PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL RATING HAS DECLINED FOUR PERCENT, SO THAT THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE "LESS THAN SATISFIED" HAS RISEN TO NEARLY FORTY-SEVEN PERCENT. THIS IS THE LOWEST APPROVAL RATING FOR AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT SINCE JIMMY CARTER'S, DURING THE IRANIAN HOSTAGE CRISIS. A WHITE HOUSE SPOKESPERSON IS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT THE DOWNTURN HAS LESS TO DO WITH THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF THAN WITH THE BROADER TOPIC OF RECENT SETBACKS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.



THE FOREIGN DESK REPORTS FROM OUR NATION'S EMBASSIES OF UNBLINKING **DISASTER** ON A GLOBAL SCALE. SPRING GALAS HAVE BEEN UNDERATTENDED AT **CATASTROPHIC** LEVELS. THE MERE **COURTESY** OF AN R.S.V.P. SEEMS TO BE A THING OF THE **PAST** FOR SOME PEOPLE. AT LEAST FOUR OF OUR MOST **FASHION-ABLE** ALLIES HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING **DISTASTE** WITH FAILED PEACE TALKS OR SOME SUCH. GOOD GRIEF, HAS EVERYONE LOST THEIR SENSE OF **PROPORTION?** AND IT DOESN'T STOP THERE. WE USED TO BE ABLE TO COUNT ON OUR OVERSEAS **STATION AGENTS** TO CLEAN UP THE LEFTOVER COLD CUTS. WELL, THE FEW THAT SHOWED UP KEPT LOOKING OVER THEIR **SHOULDERS**. MAYBE THEY DIDN'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT TAKING OVERLY LARGE SLICES OF THE **PIE**, HM?

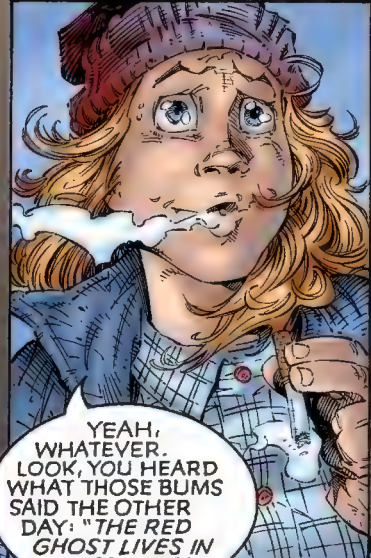


THIS IS THE MOST REMARKABLE THING **YET**. THE U.S. OF A. HAS LATELY GOTTEN ITS **FINGERS** BURNED IN PLACES THEY'VE NEVER EVEN OFFICIALLY **BEEN**. AS A RESULT, OUR PREXY IS GETTING BLINDSIDED AS HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN CHIT-CHAT GOES SOUR, AND THEN FINDS THE FINGERPRINTS ON MOST OF THE SCREW-UPS BELONG TO **PEOPLE OF HIS OWN CHOOSING!** TALK ABOUT YOUR CLASSIC DOUBLE-WHAMMY!! AND WHILE **PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY** HAS NEVER BEEN MORE **HEAVILY INVOKED**, I'M BETTING A COUPLE OF HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS AT THE C.I.A. ARE FEELING THE **NOOSE** TIGHTEN AROUND THEIR NECKS.



C'MON, ANDY, WE GO THROUGH THIS EVERY TIME. WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO RELAX?

I'M SORRY. I JUST WISH WE COULD DO THIS IN THE DAYTIME.



YEAH, WHATEVER. LOOK, YOU HEARD WHAT THOSE BUMS SAID THE OTHER DAY: "THE RED GHOST LIVES IN DARKNESS."



THAT'S GOTTA BE SPAWN. HE'S LIKE SOME COOL CREATURE OF THE NIGHT NOW.

BESIDES, I'M PACKING MY BLADE. DON'T WORRY.

FOR ALL HIS BRAVADO, EDDIE FRANK ISN'T AS TOUGH AS HE TALKS. THOUGH HE-- AND HIS ATTITUDE-- GROWS TOUGHER EVERY DAY, HE'S STILL VERY MUCH A YOUNG BOY FROM A SMALL TOWN.

THERE ARE UNWRITTEN RULES THAT GUIDE NEARLY EVERY ACTIVITY OF THE HOMELESS AND OUTCAST.

AMONG THEM: NO PERSON SHOULD ENTER 'RAT CITY' UNINVITED... FOR HIDDEN IN ITS DEEP SHADOWS ARE THINGS TO BE VERY AFRAID OF.

EVEN THE MOST FEARLESS RISK RUNNING ACROSS THEIR OWN PERSONAL BOOGIE-MAN.

Gulp!

BEWARE.



TAKE YOUR GAMES ELSEWHERE. THERE IS NO PLACE FOR CHILDREN IN THESE ALLEYS.



L-LISTEN,
OLD MAN.
WE'RE NOT
LOOKING FOR
ANY TROUBLE.

WE'RE NOT
VERY KIND TO
TRESPASSERS. SO
IT MUST BE SOME-
THING QUITE
IMPORTANT YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR.

THEN
YOU'RE
IN THE
WRONG
PLACE.

S-SPAWN.
THAT'S WHAT
HE CALLED HIM-
SELF. AT LEAST
HE DID THE LAST
TIME WE MET.

I KNOW
OF HIM. HE
DOESN'T HAVE
MANY FRIENDS.
IS THAT WHAT
YOU ARE?

YOU
COULD
SAY
THAT,
YEAH.

PLEASE,
HE'S THE
ONLY ONE
WHO CAN
HELP US.

NOT MOVING, COGLIOSTRO
STARES, THEN MOTIONS THE
BOYS TO FOLLOW. HE LEADS
THEM THROUGH A MAZE
FILLED WITH VILE ODORS
THAT MAKE EDDIE AND ANDY
CHOK. THEN, THE WIZENED
MAN STOPS.

IF YOU
CAN SOMEHOW
PENETRATE TO
HIS HUMANITY,
YOU'LL HAVE
ACCOMPLISHED
MUCH.

GOOD
LUCK.

WITH YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM, THEY
VENTURE ON... UNAWARE THAT COGLIOSTRO
KNEW EXACTLY WHY THEY'RE HERE.
HE WAS TESTING THEM.

BECAUSE THE NIGHT-
MARE THEY'VE
JUST WALKED INTO
IS REAL--

--LITTERED
WITH
GROTESQUE
PIECES OF
EVIL'S FAILED
SERVANTS--

--WHOSE FATE IS TO BE
LUMPED TOGETHER WITH
A HUNDRED MORE LOST
SOULS IN A LOATHSOME
CONSTRUCT MEANT TO
COMFORT TO HELL'S
LATEST OFFICER-IN-
TRAINING.

YET, GIVEN THE
NEGLECTIBLE
IMPACT OF THEIR
CRIMES, THIS MAY
BE HARSHER THAN
THEY DESERVE.

THIS IS
WHERE
THE NEW
SHADOW
KING NOW
LIVES.

HIS AURA RESO-
NATES WITH ALL
WHO HAVE AN
AFFINITY FOR SIN...

...PARANOIA...

...AND
FEAR.

MOMENTS
LATER...

HOLY...!

LOOK--
IT'S SOME
KINDA THRONE,
I THINK. THAT
MEANS HE
MUST LIVE
AROUND
HERE.

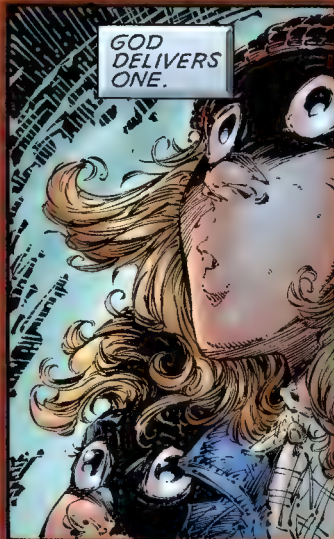
GROSS!
I'M GONNA
PUKE.

QUIT
ACTING
LIKE A
BABY.

THEN, BOTH HEAR A
RUSTLING FROM BEHIND.
AT FIRST THEY ASSUME
IT'S THE WIND. BUT, AS
A CHILLING SHADOW
ENGULFS THEM, THEY
WHISPER FRANTIC PRAYERS.

ASKING FOR
PROTECTION.

HOPING FOR
A MIRACLE.



GOD
DELIVERS
ONE.

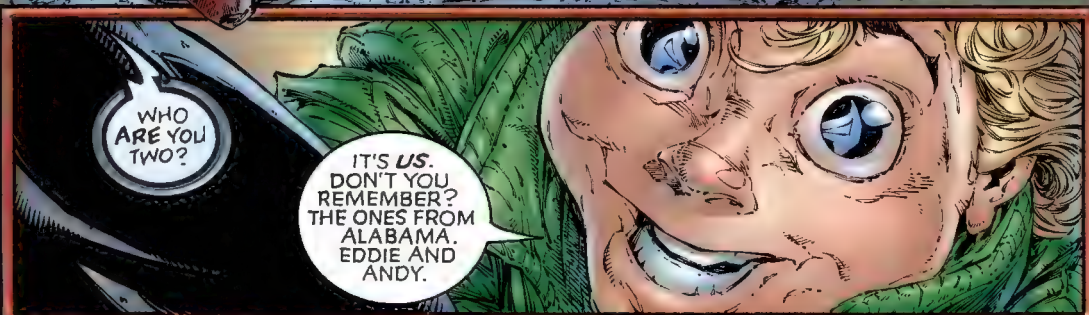


SPAWN!
IT'S *you!*

MAN, YOU HAD
US **SCARED** THERE FOR
A MINUTE. I THOUGHT
YOU WERE ANOTHER OF
THOSE FREAKY HOME-
LESS DUDES. WHAT
A BUNCH OF
LOSERS.

ANYWAYS,
HOW YOU BEEN?
THIS PLACE IS REALLY
WICKED, YOU KNOW?
I BET YOU SCARE THE
CRAP OUT OF EVERYONE,
YEAH? WITH ALL THIS
CORPSE STUFF. AND WE
SAW ALL THE BLOOD
SMEARED ALONG
THE WALLS. **ANDY**
HERE WAS A BIT
SCARED.

WAS
NOT.



WHO
ARE YOU
TWO?

IT'S **US**.
DON'T YOU
REMEMBER?
THE ONES FROM
ALABAMA.
**EDDIE AND
ANDY**.



SO WHAT'D YOU DO, RUN AWAY FROM YOUR FATHER?

SORTA. ANDY KILLED HIM. HE MADE THE HURTING STOP.

THAT'S RIGHT. THE SONUVABITCH DESERVED IT. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE LOOK IN HIS EYES AFTER YOU PUT THEM **TATTOOS** ALL OVER HIM*. HE WAS GOING TO RIP US APART.

SO AFTER I DID HIM, THE SOCIAL WORKERS PUT US WITH FOSTER PARENTS, A BUNCH OF STRICT HOLY ROLLERS.

*ISSUE 29 -- Tom.



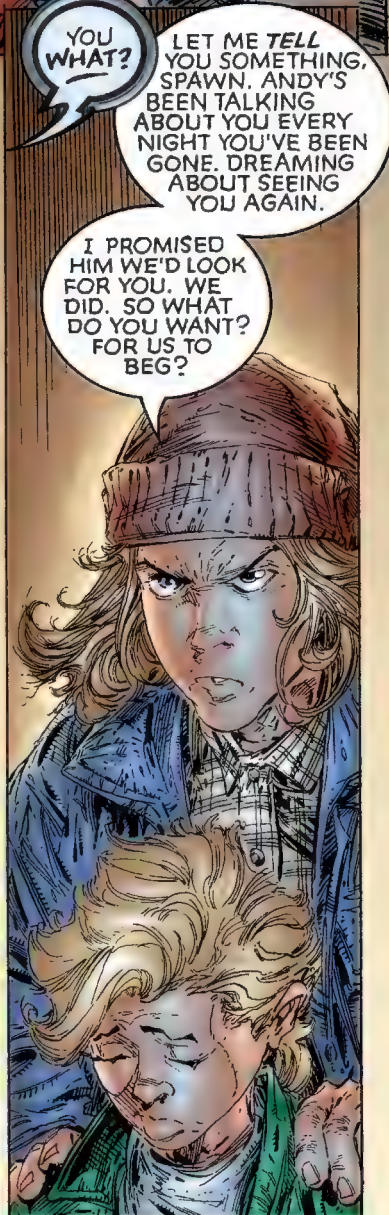
YEAH. SO ANDY BURNED THEIR HOUSE BY ACCIDENT. THE JUDGE SAID WE WERE BAD. HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW POPPA BEAT US. NO ONE DID. HIS POLICE FRIENDS DIDN'T LIKE US TALKING ABOUT IT. NO ONE WANTED TO LISTEN TO LIARS, THEY SAID.

THEY SENT US TO KIDS' JAIL.



WE KEPT WAITING FOR YOU TO COME GET US, Mr. SPAWN. BUT YOU NEVER CAME. WHY?

DIDN'T MATTER. WE GOT OUT ANYWAYS. CAME ALL THIS WAY TO SEE YOU. NOW WE'RE GOING TO **STAY** WITH YOU.



YOU WHAT?

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, SPAWN. ANDY'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOU EVERY NIGHT YOU'VE BEEN GONE. DREAMING ABOUT SEEING YOU AGAIN.

I PROMISED HIM WE'D LOOK FOR YOU. WE DID. SO WHAT DO YOU WANT? FOR US TO BEG?

YOU'RE
NOT MY
PROBLEM.

PROBLEM?!

ARE YOU *CRAZY*?!
WE DIDN'T ASK YOU
TO DRIVE OUR DAD
NUTS. WE WERE
DOING FINE BEFORE
YOU SHOWED UP. BUT
YOU MADE ME HAVE TO
KILL MY DAD! THIS
IS ALL YOUR FAULT.
NOW OUR WHOLE
LIVES ARE
SCREWED UP.

FORGET
IT! LET'S
GET-OUTTA
HERE,
ANDY!

No!

I'M NOT
GOING BACK
WITH YOU AND
SNAKE! HE'S
NOT GOOD,
MAKING YOU
DO ALL THAT
STUFF! WE NEED
TO STAY
HERE.

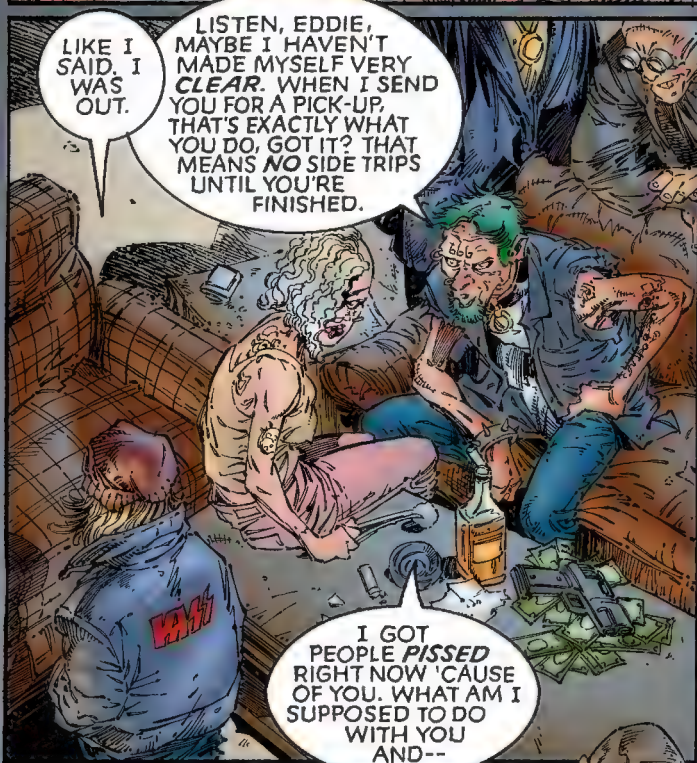
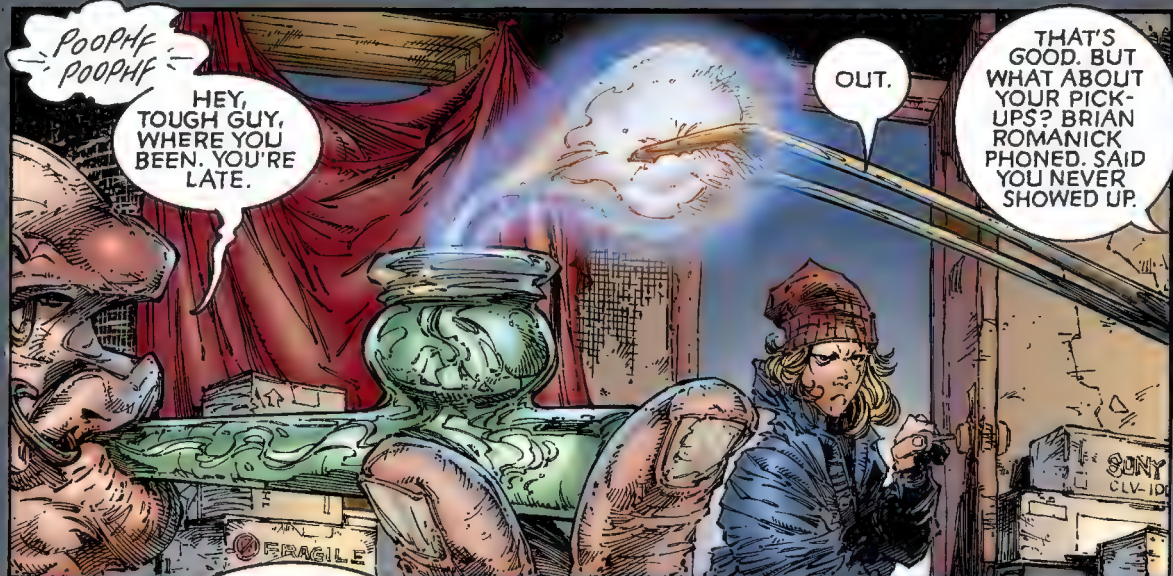
DIDN'T YOU
HEAR HIM, BOZO?
WE WASTED OUR TIME.
SPAWNIE BOY HERE
DOESN'T GIVE A RAT'S
ASS ABOUT US! *NO ONE*
DOES. HE'S JUST LIKE
DAD. SO LET'S GET
BACK. I'VE GOT
WORK TO DO.

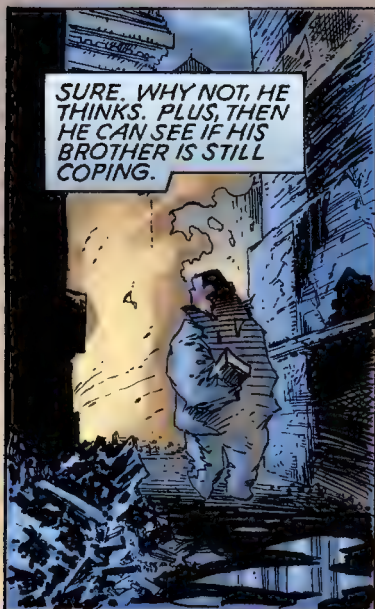
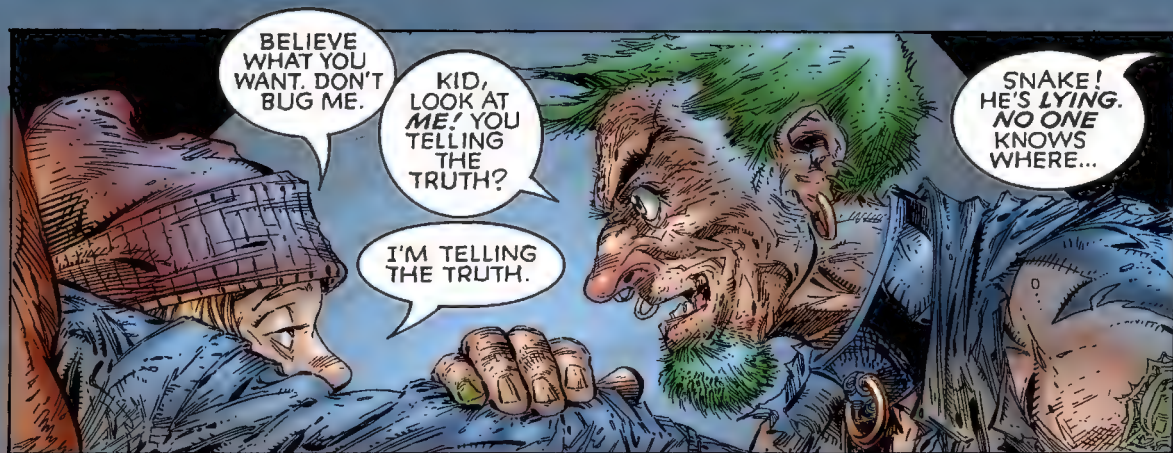
No! STOP
IT! DON'T
TOUCH ME!
I'M NOT
GOING!

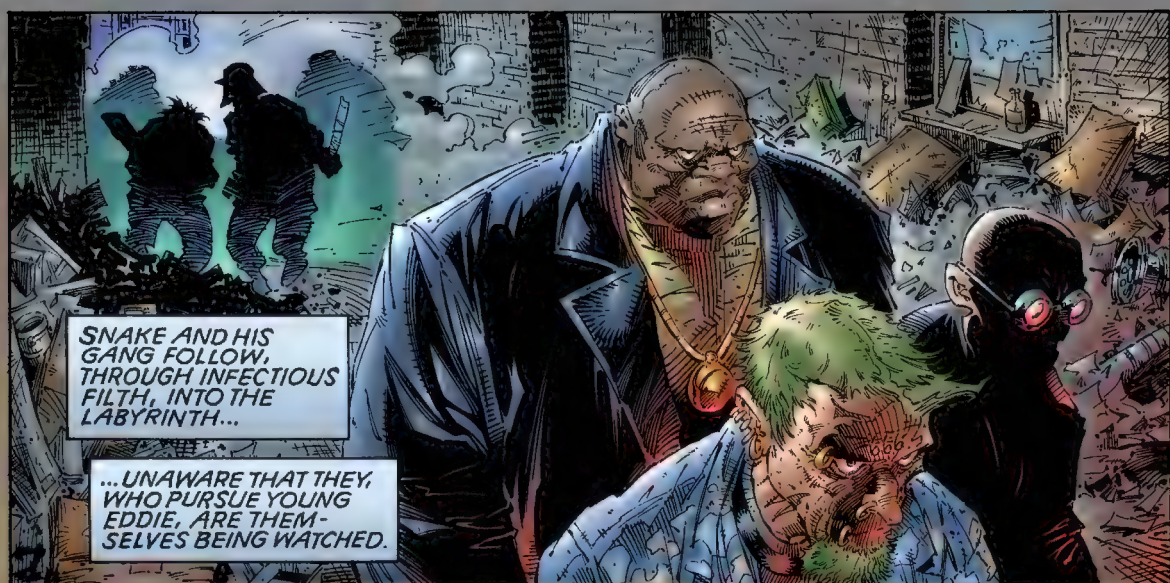
LEAVE
HIM
ALONE.

FINE,
SUIT YOUR-
SELF. YOU WANT
TO LIVE WITH SOME
FAGGOT VAMPIRE,
GO AHEAD. I'M
TIRED OF ALWAYS
BABYSITTING YOU,
ANYWAYS.

EDDIE...?







SNAKE AND HIS GANG FOLLOW, THROUGH INFECTIOUS FILTH, INTO THE LABYRINTH...

...UNAWARE THAT THEY, WHO PURSUE YOUNG EDDIE, ARE THEMSELVES BEING WATCHED.

FOR THE BOWERY LIVES BY ITS OWN UNSPOKEN LAWS.

EASY NOW, MY FRIENDS. THIS IS NOT OUR CONCERN.

JUST AS WE LET THOSE TWO CHILDREN PASS LAST NIGHT, SO WE MUST LET THESE OUTSIDERS MAKE THEIR WAY.

FORCES BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION ARE AT WORK NOW. FATE IS ABOUT TO PLAY ANOTHER OF ITS PERVERSE HANDS.



SO HOW DO YOU WANT THIS HANDLED?

LIKE USUAL. LET ME TAKE THE POINT. WHEN WE GET TO WHERE SPAWN IS, I'LL NEED YOU TO COVER MY FLANKS.

THEN WE'LL BLOW AWAY HIS SORRY ASS.

I'M TIRED OF HIM COSTING ME BUSINESS. EVER SINCE HE ARRIVED MY SCORES HAVE BEEN NERVOUS. BUT NO ONE'S BEEN ABLE TO GET A BEAD ON HIM.



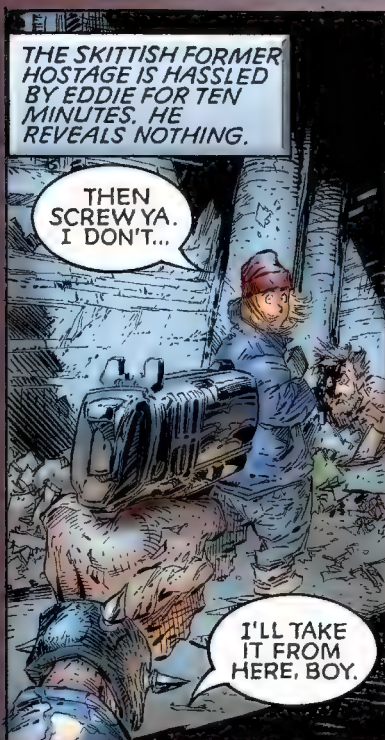


"THANKS TO OUR NEW RECRUIT, THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE."

I'M LOOKING FOR MY BROTHER. WHERE IS HE?

LEAVE ME ALONE.

ANSWER THE QUESTION AND I WILL.



THE SKITTISH FORMER HOSTAGE IS HASSLED BY EDDIE FOR TEN MINUTES. HE REVEALS NOTHING.

THEN SCREW YA. I DON'T...

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, BOY.



SNAKE?!

I'M GOING TO MAKE THIS VERY SIMPLE. BY THE COUNT OF *THREE*, IF YOU HAVEN'T FRIGGIN' TOLD ME WHERE SPAWN IS, YOUR *BRAINS* ARE GOING TO BE DECORATING THAT *WALL*.



SEE, ME AND MY ASSOCIATES DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO YOUR HERO'S ACTIVITIES.

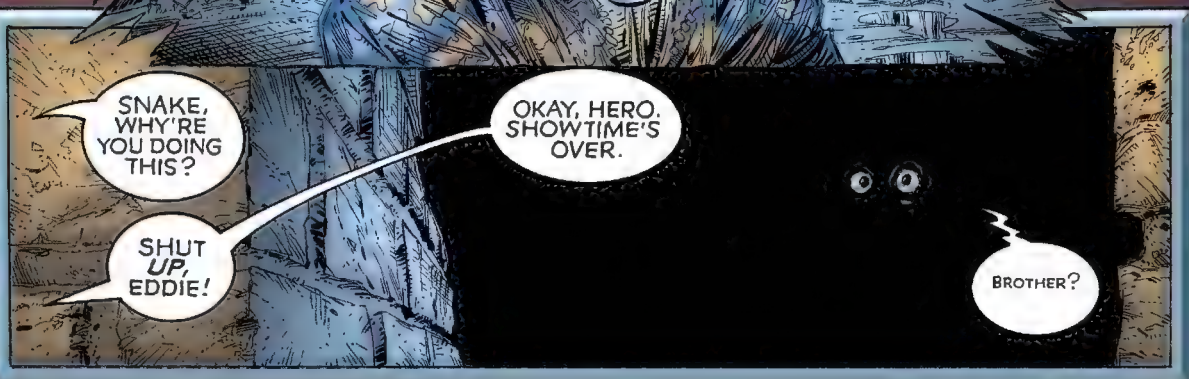
AIN'T THAT RIGHT, FELLAS?



FELLAS...?

JIMMY!! SANCHEZ! WHERE ARE YOU?

uh?



SNAKE, WHY'RE YOU DOING THIS?

SHUT UP, EDDIE!

OKAY, HERO. SHOWTIME'S OVER.

BROTHER?



C'MERE, KID!

CHNK!

SHOW YOURSELF, FREAK, BEFORE I WASTE THIS KID. SANCHEZ, JIMMY, GET READY!!



YOUR FRIENDS WON'T BE MUCH HELP. I'VE ALREADY SEEN TO THAT.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.



SUCK ME! YOU GODDAMN SPOOK!



THREE SHOTS HIT WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A CHEST. THE REALITY IS SOMETHING FAR MORE FRIGHTENING.

CHRIST! WHERE'D THOSE COME FROM?!



THEN, FROM BEHIND...

PUT MY BROTHER DOWN!



INSTINCTIVELY, THE MADMAN REACTS.

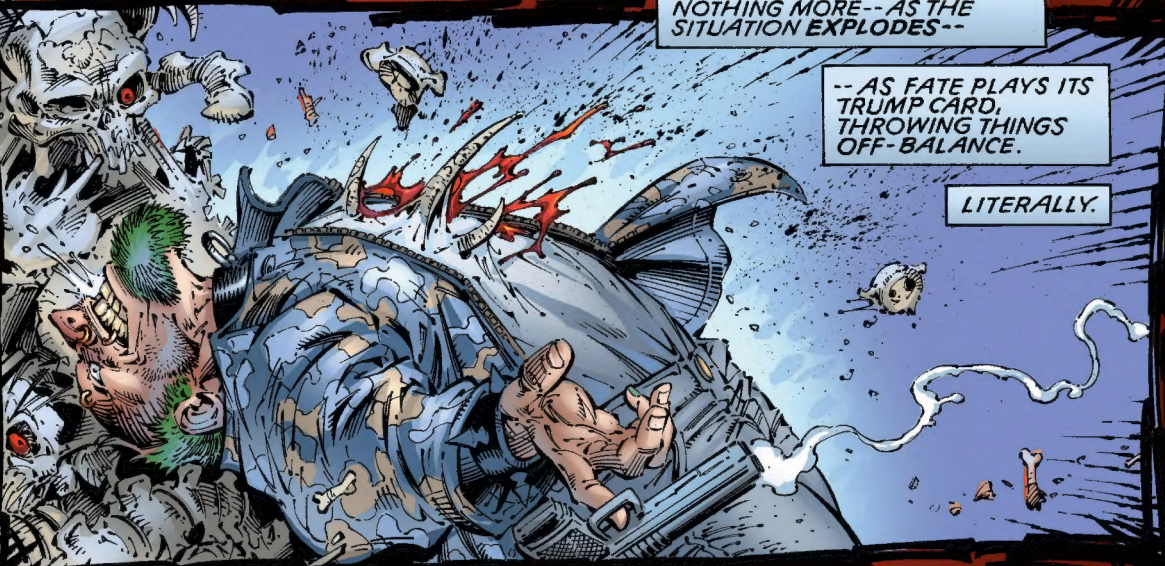
BAM



ANDY?
NO!
I'LL KILL YOU, SNAKE!



IT WAS MEANT AS A THREAT-- NOTHING MORE-- AS THE SITUATION EXPLODES--



-- AS FATE PLAYS ITS TRUMP CARD, THROWING THINGS OFF-BALANCE.

LITERALLY.



HE'S
GOING TO
NEED A
DOCTOR.



SURE.

WE NEED
TO HURRY,
THOUGH,
PLEASE. HE'S
HURT BAD.

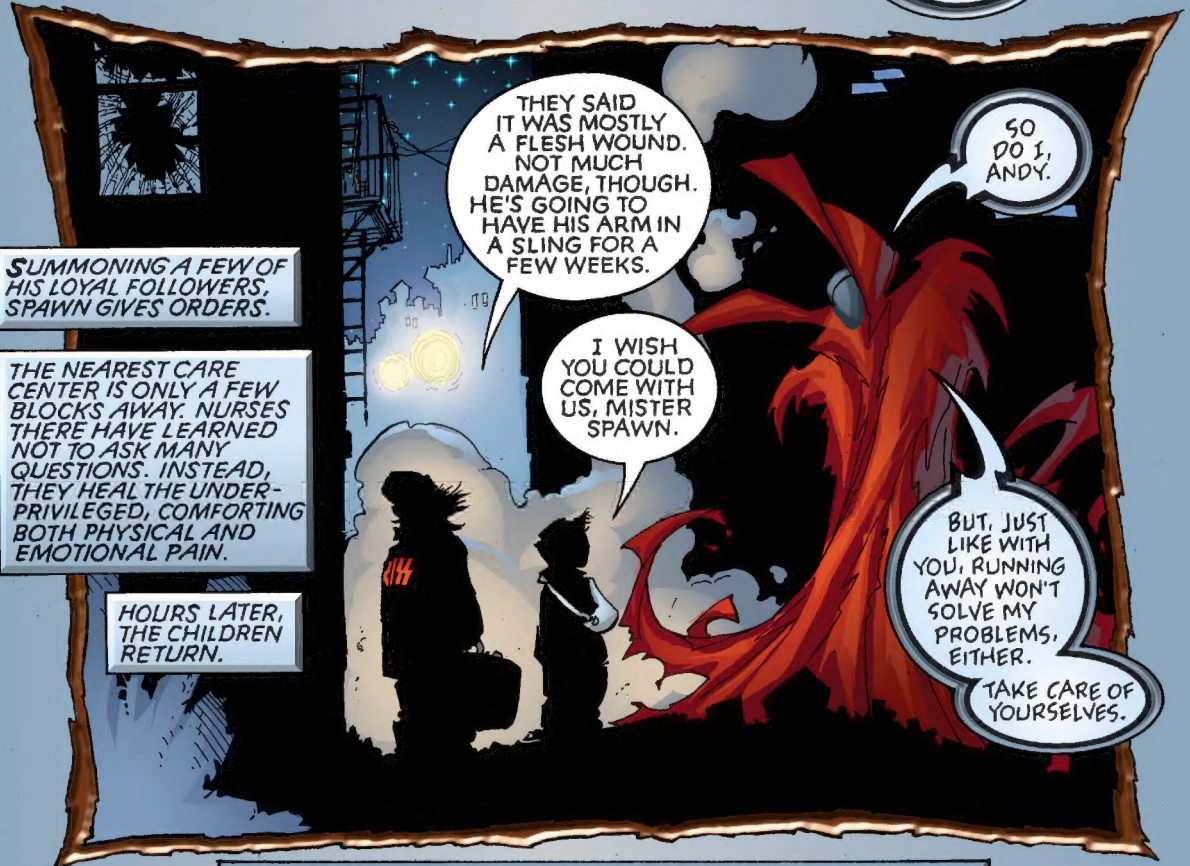
IT'S GOING
TO BE OKAY,
ANDY. YOU JUST
LAY NICE AND
STILL NOW.



I'M SO
SORRY THIS
HAPPENED. I
MEANT TO PROTECT
YOU. I SHOULD
NEVER HAVE
LEFT YOU.

I PROMISED
MOM YOU'D
A-ALWAYS
BE SAFE.

I
KNOW
PEOPLE WHO
CAN HELP.



SUMMONING A FEW OF
HIS LOYAL FOLLOWERS,
SPAWN GIVES ORDERS.

THE NEAREST CARE
CENTER IS ONLY A FEW
BLOCKS AWAY. NURSES
THERE HAVE LEARNED
NOT TO ASK MANY
QUESTIONS. INSTEAD,
THEY HEAL THE UNDER-
PRIVILEGED, COMFORTING
BOTH PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL PAIN.

HOURS LATER,
THE CHILDREN
RETURN.

THEY SAID
IT WAS MOSTLY
A FLESH WOUND.
NOT MUCH
DAMAGE, THOUGH.
HE'S GOING TO
HAVE HIS ARM IN
A SLING FOR A
FEW WEEKS.

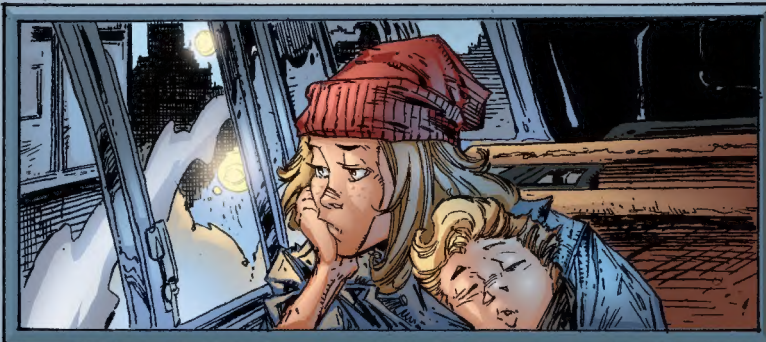
I WISH
YOU COULD
COME WITH
US, MISTER
SPAWN.

SO
DO I,
ANDY.

BUT, JUST
LIKE WITH
YOU, RUNNING
AWAY WON'T
SOLVE MY
PROBLEMS,
EITHER.

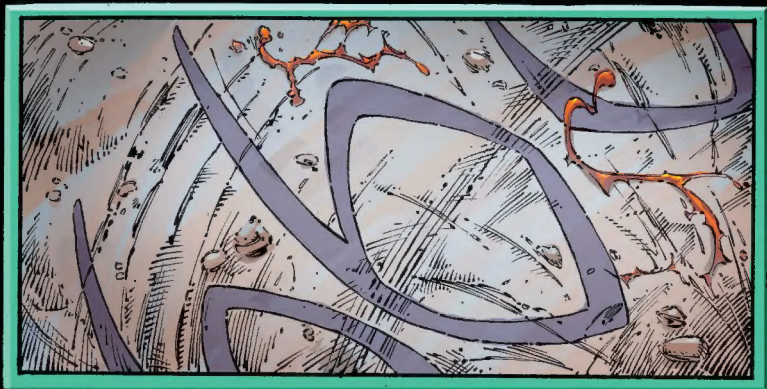
TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELVES.

AS THEY
TURN TO GO,
HE WANTS
TO SAY SO
MUCH MORE
TO THEM. HE
REMAINS
SILENT.

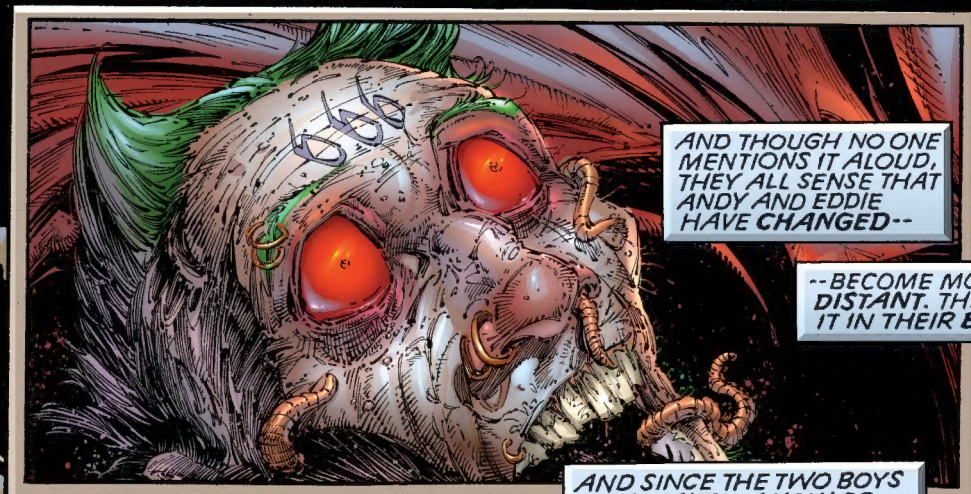


A FEW DAYS
LATER, THEY
ARRIVE BACK
IN FLORENCE.
THE STAFF AT
THE JUVENILE
CENTER ARE
STARTLED
THAT THEY'VE
RETURNED
VOLUNTARILY.

**BOTH WILL
RECEIVE THE
STANDARD
LECTURES
AS WELL AS
HAVING MANY
OF THEIR
PRIVILEGES
TEMPORARILY
REVOKED.**



**WHEN THE
OTHER YOUTHS
BEGIN TAUNTING
THEM AGAIN,
THE SOON TIRE
OF IT BECAUSE
THEY ARE
DRAWING NO
REACTION.**



**AND THOUGH NO ONE
MENTIONS IT ALOUD,
THEY ALL SENSE THAT
ANDY AND EDDIE
HAVE CHANGED--**

**--BECOME MORE
DISTANT. THEY SEE
IT IN THEIR EYES.**

**AND SINCE THE TWO BOYS
HAVE TAKEN A VOW OF
SILENCE, THE OTHERS CAN
DO LITTLE BUT WONDER.**

**WHAT BAFLES THE
COUNSELORS EVEN
FURTHER IS HOW A COUPLE
OF DECENT SMALL-TOWN
KIDS COULD CHANGE, IN
SUCH A SHORT TIME, INTO
COLD, EMOTIONLESS INDI-
VIDUALS WITH THE
CAPACITY FOR MURDER...**



**... AND WHAT COULD
HAVE STRIPPED THEM
OF THEIR INNOCENCE
AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE.**





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE